

Frequently asked questions about the Japanese beetle eradication program.

#### WHAT IS THE THREAT?

Japanese beetles are a highly destructive insect that eats plant, shrubs and tree leaves and roots of lawn grass. It is a statewide threat.

It impacts our ability to grow gardens, enjoy our private property and our quality of life.

It threatens Utah's \$125 million fruit, vegetable and greenhouse nursery industry.

The estimated consumer cost to control JB is \$500,000/year (Orem treatment area).

This is an insect that will eventually affect every Utahn if it is not stopped now.

#### SITUATION?

The infestation area is small enough now, the UDAF highly believes the population can be eradicated provided all residents volunteer for the free program.

#### WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

The beetle must be eradicated, not controlled.

Eradicated means total elimination.

Control means we learn to live with the pest.

Trained and licensed lawn care professionals will spread a common insecticide on lawns and soil in early to mid June. This will help kill the beetle while it lives underground. In late June and early July, two applications of another common insecticide will be sprayed on all trees, shrubs and other above ground vegetation.

Our plan is patterned after three successful eradication efforts in Oregon, California and Nevada.

No reported health problems with animals or humans.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

Determine whether your property falls within the treatment boundaries.

Sign and return the notification/access slips

Substitute flowers or other cover crops for food producing plants and trees in your garden for the 3 year treatment period

Do not aerate or power rake lawns in treatment areas

Bag ALL soil, root balls, and sod waste and send to landfill.

For above ground green waste adhere to Orem City's recommendations –<http://orem.org>

### **STATEMENT FROM UTAH AGRICULTURE AND FOOD COMMISSIONER LEONARD BLACKHAM ON THE DESTRUCTIVE JAPANESE BEETLE EMERGENCY**

Our number one priority is public safety. Our second priority is eradication.

The control materials identified for use (Merit and Tempo) are NOT considered harmful to humans or animals when applied according to label instructions.

The products are considered safe and effective, and are commonly used by lawn care professionals and individual homeowners.

These products were successfully used in other states to eradicate the Japanese beetle with no reported health problems to humans or animals.

The current public meetings have generated overwhelming public support for the eradication plan from Orem residents living within the Japanese beetle treatment area. (800 N., State St., 400 S., 1100 W., Orem)

Individuals who do not participate in the treatment plan are threatening the success of the eradication efforts, which could lead to the spread Japanese beetle throughout the city of Orem and the state of Utah.

The UDAF has not declared an official insect emergency. We are asking for voluntary cooperation.

We've used the best information available, including advice from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to help us determine which treatment products to use.

Common questions asked by residents at three public meetings in Orem held on March 15, 20, and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**YOU HAVEN'T FOUND BEETLES IN MY AREA WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE TREATED?**

Adult Japanese beetles (JB) can fly one to two miles. Computer models from states with Japanese beetle experience shows infestations can be present some distance from a property known to have the beetle.

**WHY 3 YEARS INSTEAD OF 1?**

If we felt we could eradicate it completely in 1 year, we would. 3 years is a precaution. It's standard procedure in an insect eradication program.

**DIAZINON, MALATHION, NEMATODES, ETC. WILL KILL THE BEETLE. WHY NOT USE THESE?**

Control vs. eradication. Research shows nematodes are only 70% effective. Milky spores are about 70% effective. Eradication requires 100% effectiveness.

**WILL WE HAVE TO DO THIS AGAIN IN THE FUTURE?**

The beetle could be reintroduced and we'd have to do it again. Next time we'd catch it earlier and the measures would not be as intensive.

**CAN MY KIDS PLAY ON THE GRASS?**

Yes, after the product has dried and adhered to the plants or absorbed into the soil. About 1 to 2 hours in dry weather.

**CAN ANIMALS EAT GRASS (GOATS, COWS)?**

Yes. The amount of the material available to grazers would be low - they'd have to ingest a large amount to consume enough of the active ingredient to hurt them.

### CAN I PLANT TOMATOES IN POTS?

Containers will be treated. This beetle prefers to lay eggs in sod but occasionally if soil is moist enough she'll lay them other places. Don't grow tomatoes in pots or hanging baskets. The containers will be treated. Don't take them inside on treatment day and then bring them back out. Indoor gardens are fine. Greenhouses are ok but are expensive, difficult to manage. Don't use the soil from your yard in the greenhouse. Bring in clean soil or potting mix. Greenhouse would have to be completely screened because these beetles do fly.

### WILL THIS AFFECT MY PROPERTY VALUES?

If we don't fix it at this time it will have a detrimental effect on property values.

### IS THIS A STATE OR A CITY PROGRAM?

The majority of expenses are incurred by the State through the UDA Insect Infestation Account. The local community (city, county government) may also help.

### QUESTIONS FROM CARDS THAT WERE PASSED AROUND:

CONCERNS ABOUT ALLERGIES OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS? ASTHMA? CHEMO PATIENTS? GREATER RISK FOR THEM? INFANTS, ELDERLY TOO. Anything can be poisonous. If your system is not developed or not as effective as could be, you are more susceptible to just about anything in your environment. We don't think the amounts of treatment on the surfaces will make those conditions worse. However, if you are concerned, move out of the area during the application time. Or stay indoors with windows closed. They're not going to be airborne. You smell the inert ingredients. The idea is to manage the risks and get the benefits out of the product. Risk - free? Probably not. But no undue risks.

Advance treatment notice will be sent to residents so you know the day and time application will be made. Contact Joyce Johnson if you need to be put on the list of people who have lung problems. (801) 229-7194.

### ARE THE CHEMICALS CARCINOGENIC?

Massive doses would be. These are popular products already being used extensively. We have already encountered these molecules in different products, even ingesting them in our food supply. The dose should not be high enough to cause ill health effects. We're not saying they are safe, but that we know how to manage them. Due to a legal technicality, Merit and Tempo do not have food use listed on their labels. Therefore it's illegal to use on foods.

### WHAT ABOUT BIRDS AND BEES WHEN GARDENS ARE BEING SPRAYED?

Birds: The risk to them eating the grubs eating the treated roots of your lawn. A bird would have to ingest its own body weight in grubs to be detrimental.

Bees: Merit is highly toxic to aquatic invertebrates and insects and is highly toxic to bees exposed to direct treatment or residue. Milky spore is not toxic to adult bees; but if they

take it back to the hive it will kill the larvae. Chemicals used according to the label are safe and non-toxic to non-target insects and animals.

Merit 2F is listed for use on home lawns, parks, playgrounds, sod farms. Wait for re-entry period - that means when it's safe to re-enter the area after spraying. Apples, crabapples, pears, and quince are approved for use with Merit. Don't use it on stone fruits. Many fruits have a higher concentration of moisture and it may impart an "off" taste. Wait 7 days between application and harvest on fruits such as (apples, pears). You can eat grapes the same day as application.

#### **WHAT ABOUT PLASTIC UNDER THE MULCH? TAKE IT UP WHEN THEY SPRAY?**

What can happen is she probably won't lay her eggs under the plastic. But overwintering larvae go deep in the soil and move laterally and could pupate and if there's a tear in the plastic they could go through it. We recommend removing plastic.

#### **IF THE PRODUCT IS SAFE WHY CAN'T I EAT MY TOMATOES?**

A technicality. Merit and Tempo are not labeled for use on tomatoes or various food crops because it was not a label application. This is a Federal law.

#### **MERIT HAS A HALF LIFE OF 2 YEARS. IS THERE A POTENTIAL TO LEAK INTO GROUND WATER? HOW WILL THIS RISK BE MINIMIZED?**

According to the label it won't be applied near water. Once applied to soil it adheres very tightly to the soil. Pure sand that is vibrated while being flooded is susceptible. If applied according to rates indicated on the label should not be a problem. It's highly unlikely that from this type of application that it'll be a risk to our groundwater.

#### **IF WE ARE ALREADY GETTING LAWN CARE TREATMENT, SHOULD WE CONTINUE WITH THE COMMERCIAL LAWN CARE?**

If you use a commercial lawn service that does fertilizers and pesticides, remind them that you are in the treatment area. You don't need to have the grub treatment. But still continue to take good care of your lawn (except for aerating). Control your weeds, fertilize, etc.

#### **SOMEONE SAW THE BEETLE IN THEIR YARD OUTSIDE THE TARGET AREA.**

Yes - they fly. We trapped on 1,000 foot grid and identified the epicenter. Treatment is based on probability of females laying eggs in your yard. Next year we may come to homes outside the zone and ask to apply the treatment.

#### **RISK OF ACCIDENTAL INGESTION OF FRUIT OR VEGETABLES?**

Not much harm because of the dose. And we already do have some exposure levels to these. A baby would be more susceptible because it's smaller and not as developed, but Howard still doesn't think the amount is enough to be harmful.

**WHAT ABOUT RESIDUE ON STRAWBERRY PLANTS, FRUIT TREES, ETC.  
AFTER THE 3 YEARS?**

The only one to worry about would be Merit. This needs research. Howard predicted that the low dose wouldn't cause you harm after 3 years of treatment. Fall treatment would still have residue in the spring.

**WHAT ABOUT MY RASPBERRY PATCH?**

Meredith: Small fruits like raspberries and strawberries - keep them from fruiting to keep the kids from eating them. Recommendation: Apply Florel (causes the flowers to abort - works for trees because they bloom all at once). Turn the strawberries under. This helps reduce fungal disease in soil. On raspberries - you can spray with Florel but repeat for each blossom. A more natural alternative - keep it mowed down. Do more than once during the year. Cover with row cover so blossoms not visible or available for pollination.

**CAN HOMEOWNERS USE PRODUCTS IN ADDITION TO UDA TREATMENT?**

Before and after treatment the homeowners will be given info. on what has been done. It is not necessary to do anything but keep the yard clean. Outside of the treatment area, you can do the treatments on your own if you want to.

**SHOULD I AERATE?**

No. Aeration units are being rented out all over the city. Some aeration was done in the target zone already. UDA will contact the rental companies to educate them about the risks.

**ARE MULCHING MOWERS OK?**

It's OK to leave the clippings here - just don't take them out of the area. Make sure your clippings are bagged securely.

**WHAT ABOUT PLANTING IN JULY?**

Do not plant food crops after your property has been treated. The chemical will be there.

**WHAT IF WE LIVE IN THIS AREA AND HAUL YOUR MOWER TO MOW  
SOMEONE ELSE'S LAWN?**

Try to borrow their mower.

**GREEN YARD WASTE PICKUP PROGRAM IN THE ZONE.**

Check their fact sheet. Attempting to get UDOT highway bags to put clippings in. But any bag is fine. Orange bags will be distributed through Arthur Flinton and Joyce Johnson, Neighborhood Action person in this neighborhood. 229 - 7194.

**ANIMALS WHO DIG IN THE DIRT - WILL IT HURT OR KILL THEM?**

Highly unlikely. Not enough material in the dirt and they won't be eating the dirt. Not readily absorbed through the skin and not in the air. If it gets the dirt still won't get very much compared to the size of the animal. People have used these chemical on animals to

control fleas and ticks. Warm-blooded animals are resistant to the effects of these insecticides. The chemicals affect cold-blooded organisms: Fish.

For more information visit [www.ag.utah.gov](http://www.ag.utah.gov)